

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ICAE-00 PA-01 INR-10 /024 W  
-----013642 211929Z /42

R 211835Z JUN 78  
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3386  
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE  
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AMCONSUL LENINGRAD  
AMCONSUL MUNICH  
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE  
AMEMBASSY SOFIA  
USICA WASHDC  
AMEMBASSY WARSAW

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E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PINT, SCUL, UR  
SUBJECT: GLAZUNOV GETS MIXED REVIEWS

REF: MOSCOW 13484 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: PRAVDA REVIEW OF GLAZUNOV'S EXHIBIT IS  
MIXED BY NOT DAMNING. TWO MOSCOW ARTISTS WE  
RECENTLY SPOKE WITH ALSO DISPLAY MIXED FEELINGS  
ABOUT GLAZUNOV. END SUMMARY.

1. PRAVDA'S ASSESSMENT. THE LONG-STANDING CONTRO-  
VERSY ABOUT GLAZUNOV'S RELATIONSHIP WITH SOVIET  
OFFICIALDOM (I.E., IS HIS RUSSIAN NATIONALISM  
SUPPORTED BY TOP-LEVEL POLITICAL FIGURES, IS HE  
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CONNECTED WITH THE KGB, DOES HE WILLINGLY COOPERATE  
WITH CULTURAL AUTHORITIES FOR PERSONAL GAIN?) IS  
NOT CLARIFIED BY PRAVDA'S JUNE 15 REVIEW OF HIS  
MANEZH EXHIBIT. NEVER CALLING INTO QUESTION GLAZUNOV'S  
TALENTS AS AN ARTIST, WHICH, GIVEN UNEVEN QUALITY  
OF EXHIBIT, WOULD BE EASY TO DO, REVIEWER DMITRIY  
ZHUKOV NEVERTHELESS ACCENTS CONTROVERSIAL NATURE

OF EXHIBIT AND TAKES GLAZUNOV TO TASK FOR HIS:

--LINGERING PESSIMISM, PENCHANT FOR RELIGIOUS THEMES, AND STRESS ON THE TRAGIC IN RUSSIAN HISTORY;

--FAILURE TO GIVE THE MASSES, AS OPPOSED TO LEADING PERSONALITIES, A GREATER ROLE IN HIS HISTORICAL PAINTINGS;

--JUXTAPOSITIONING OF PAST AND PRESENT TO THE DISADVANTAGE OF "CONTEMPORARY SOCIALISM AND SCIENTIFIC-TECHNICAL PROGRESS";

--AMBIGUOUS SYMBOLISM OF "RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL SON", WHICH OPENS DOOR TO "VARIOUS FABRICATIONS AND FALSE RUMORS".

2. ALTHOUGH ZHUKOV CONCEDES THAT "INTERNATIONALISM IS IMPOSSIBLE WITHOUT LOVE FOR ONE'S FATHERLAND", HE CALLS INTO QUESTION GLAZUNOV'S EXCESSIVE CONCERN WITH RUSSIAN "ROOTS" AND SUGGESTS GLAZUNOV TRY HARDER TO UNDERSTAND "SOVIET REALITY" AND HISTORY. ZHUKOV ENDS ON OPTIMISTIC NOTE, SENSING IN SOME OF GLAZUNOV'S WORK MOVEMENT IN THIS DIRECTION.

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3. IN A RELATED DEVELOPMENT, THE DOCUMENTARY FILM ABOUT GLAZUNOV AND HIS ART, (WHICH APPEARED BRIEFLY LAST YEAR BUT WAS SUDDENLY WITHDRAWN WHEN HIS 1977 MOSCOW EXHIBIT FELL THROUGH) HAS REAPPEARED IN MOSCOW MOVIE THEATRES.

4. VIEWS OF FELLOW ARTISTS. A SCULPTOR WE KNOW, LONG A MEMBER OF THE UNION OF ARTISTS UNTIL HE WAS FORCED TO RESIGN SIX MONTHS AGO BECAUSE HE APPLIED TO EMIGRATE, RECENTLY INSISTED THAT GLAZUNOV WAS A TOOL OF THE KGB. ONLY THIS COULD EXPLAIN WHY HE WAS ALLOWED TO EXHIBIT NEXT TO THE KREMLIN, AND WHY HE WAS CHOSEN TO PAINT BREZHNEV'S PORTRAIT. AS TO THE SCANDAL LAST YEAR OVER "MYSTERY OF THE 20TH CENTURY," OUR SOURCE ASCRIBED IT TO GLAZUNOV'S SPOILED CHILD'S DESIRE TO ADD TO HIS MANY HATS THAT OF "DISSIDENT."

5. GLAZUNOV IS WELL AWARE OF THE RUMORS WHICH HAVE SWIRLED AROUND HIM FOR YEARS. HE HAS GONE SO FAR AS TO COMMISSION A SAMIZDAT BOOKLET, WHICH WE UNDERSTAND WAS WRITTEN BY DISSIDENT HISTORIAN

IVANOV-SKURATOV, WITH A TITLE THAT GETS STRAIGHT TO THE POINT: "THE RUSSIAN IDEA OR THE KGB? WHO IS GLAZUNOV?" AS ONE MIGHT EXPECT, THE BOOKLET PORTRAYS GLAZUNOV AS A FEARLESS FIGHTER FOR THE RUSSIAN IDEA AND A FOE OF OFFICIAL SOCIALIST REALISM AS WELL AS NONCONFORMIST ABSTRACTIONISM.

6. ANOTHER VIEW OF GLAZUNOV RECENTLY WAS GIVEN US BY AN ABSTRACTIONIST PAINTER ACTIVE IN THE MOSCOW

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CITY UNION OF GRAPHIC ARTISTS. ACCORDING TO THIS SOURCE, GLAZUNOV'S COLLEAGUES IN THE GOVERNING BOARD OF THE RSFSR UNION OF ARTISTS RECENTLY VOTED HIM OUT OF THE BOARD BY AN OVERWHELMING MARGIN, EVEN THOUGH GLAZUNOV IS AN "HONORED ARTIST OF THE RSFSR." AT ABOUT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, GLAZUNOV REPORTEDLY WAS APPOINTED PROFESSOR OF PORTRAITURE AT A PRESTIGIOUS MOSCOW ART INSTITUTE. SOURCE CITED THESE CONTRADICTORY DEVELOPMENTS TO ILLUSTRATE HIS CONVICTION THAT GLAZUNOV HAS ASCENDED IN THE SOVIET ART WORLD THANKS TO SUPPORT FROM "ABOVE" RATHER THAN SUPPORT FROM HIS COLLEAGUES. HE ALSO EXPRESSED THE FEAR

THAT GLAZUNOV WOULD ACT TO DRIVE THOSE ARTISTS NOT  
SYMPATHETIC TO HIS APPROACH OUT OF THE INSTITUTE.

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7. THIS SOURCE DID NOT REFER TO GLAZUNOV'S ALLEGED  
CONNECTION WITH THE KGB, BUT HE DID THINK THAT  
GLAZUNOV ENJOYED THE ADMIRATION AND SUPPORT OF  
POLITBURO MEMBER SUSLOV AND MINISTER OF INTERNAL  
AFFAIRS (AND BREZHNEV PROTEGE) SHCHELOKOV. SOURCE  
ADDED THAT HE PERSONALLY RESPECTED  
GLAZUNOV'S ABILITY AS A PORTRAITIST, AND THOUGHT  
GLAZUNOV HAD A ROLE TO PLAY IN CONTEMPORARY SOVIET  
ART BY REPRESENTING THE RUSSIAN TRADITION, WHICH WAS  
DONE NEITHER BY THE ART ESTABLISHMENT NOR BY THE  
PAINTERS WHO BELONGED TO THE UNION OF GRAPHIC  
ARTISTS.

8. COMMENT: ZHUKOV REVIEW ADDS TO THE CONTROVERSY  
AND MYSTERY SURROUNDING THE PRICKLY GLAZUNOV, BUT  
MAKES CLEAR THAT HIS GREAT RUSSIAN NATIONALISM--  
WHETHER SINCERE OR OPPORTUNISTIC--HAS BY NO MEANS  
LANDED HIM BEYOND THE PALE OF THE OFFICIAL WORLD  
OF SOVIET ART. INDEED, IT HAS BECOME A LUCRATIVE  
VEHICLE FOR SELF-AGGRANDIZEMENT- WHETHER SPONSORED  
OR NOT BY THE KGB - WITH GLAZUNOV RELISHING EVERY  
MOMENT SPENT IN THE LIMELIGHT. GLAZUNOV REMAINS  
A PUZZLING FIGURE, PARADOXICAL TO SOME, HYPOCRITICAL  
TO OTHERS: A SELF-PROCLAIMED RUSSITE WHO THROUGH  
HIS ART QUESTIONS REGIME POLICIES AND LAMPOONS THE  
WESTERN WORLD, YET ASSIDUOUSLY CULTIVATES THE  
FOREIGN PRESS AND DIPLOMATIC CORPS AND DOESN'T  
SHRINK FROM SPORTING THE LATEST IN JEANS SUITS  
AND SNAPPY TIES. MATLOCK

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## Message Attributes

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